

Issue 32 | September 2009

PLAYZINE

Free Magazine for Handheld and Wii Gamers. *Pass it on to your friends and family*

EXCLUSIVE!

ASSASSIN'S CREED: BLOODLINES

The best PSP adventure yet?

PREVIEWED!

PSP

MOTORSTORM ARCTIC EDGE

Ice to see you!

WII

REVIEWED!

CURSED MOUNTAIN

We survived the horror!

BONUS
MAGAZINE

PREVIEWED!

PSP

JAK & DAXTER: THE LOST FRONTIER

They're back on PSP!

DS

PREVIEWED!

BAND HERO

A digital one-man band?

FIRST LOOK!

DS

MODERN WARFARE MOBILISED

War comes to the DS

WII

REVIEWED!

THE BEATLES: ROCK BAND

We love it? Yeah, yeah, yeah!



WELCOME

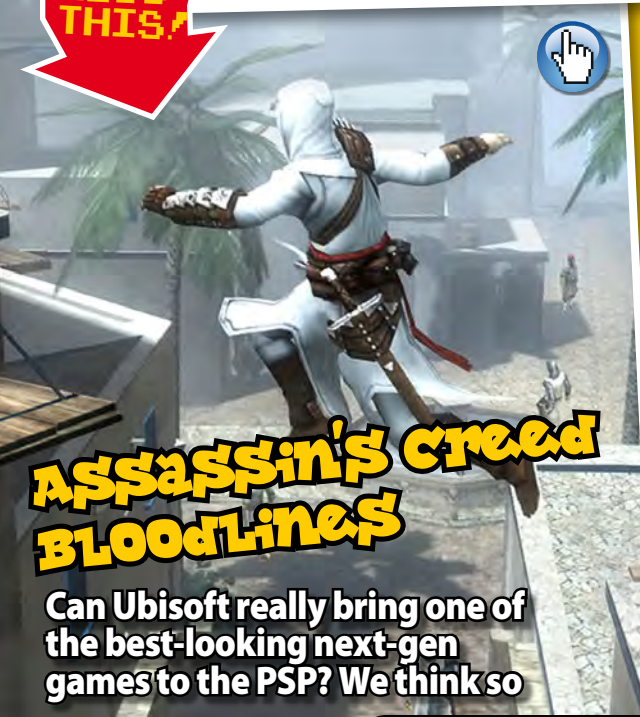


Like videogames? Good for you. We do, too. So much so in fact, that we spend every month putting together this magazine, crammed to the edges with the latest news, previews and reviews of everything that's worthy for the Wii, DS, PSP and PS2. And if you like it, then spread the love and tell your mates, too!

Dean Mortlock, Editor

HGZine@gamerzines.com

DON'T MISS THIS!



ASSASSIN'S CREED BLOODLINES

Can Ubisoft really bring one of the best-looking next-gen games to the PSP? We think so



CHECK THIS!

CURSED MOUNTAIN

PLUS LOADS MORE REVIEWS!

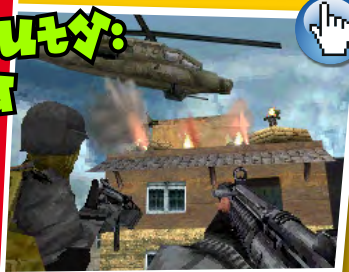
Professor Layton and Pandora's Box
The Beatles: Rock Band
DJ Star

Chris Schilling
Chris showed his musical side this month, with DJ Star and The Beatles: Rock Band.



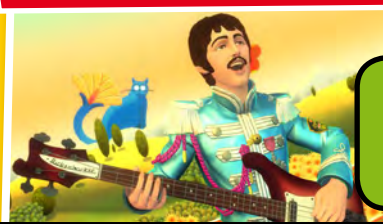
CALL OF DUTY: MOBILIZED

CoD goes back to the frontline on the DS!



THE BEATLES: ROCK BAND

The best Rock Band yet?



David Scammell
David is very excited about Gran Turismo coming to PSP.



QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

PREVIEWS

NINTENDO WII
Super Monkey Ball Step & Roll
Disney Pixar Up

Sony PSP
Jak and Daxter: The Lost Frontier

- Motorstorm
- Arctic Edge
- Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines
- NINTENDO DS**
- Call of Duty: Modern Warfare Mobilized
- Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story

REVIEWS

NINTENDO WII
Cursed Mountain
The Beatles: Rock Band

NINTENDO DS
Professor Layton and Pandora's Box
DJ Star



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If you are reading this, then you didn't choose "Play" when Adobe Reader asked you about multimedia when you opened the magazine.

Without the multimedia playing, the magazine will look correct, but you will be missing out on all of the extra content built into each issue, like videos, animated screenshots, annotations, quizzes, competitions and more.

We recommend you close and re-open the magazine and select "Play" when asked about the multimedia to enjoy the magazine as intended.



info

CALL OF DUTY

FROM: Activision
A BIT LIKE...

Brothers in Arms

WEB: www.callofduty.com

OUT: November

DS

CALL OF DUTY: MODERN WARFARE: MODERNISED

Touch the battlefield as CoD returns to DS

WHAT'S THE STORY?

The world's about to go Call of Duty mental, and Activision want to spread the madness onto DS. Though it's not clear how Mobilised fits in with the Modern Warfare timeline, Activision assure us that DS players will receive an authentic CoD experience as they fight through a variety of missions and take

control of a range of military vehicles, including tanks and spy drones.


WHAT DO WE KNOW SO FAR?

There's a six-player online mode too, plus an all-new Survival mode and score-chasing Arcade mode, which should keep you coming back after the end credits roll.

WHEN DO WE GET MORE?

Mobilised goes on sale on the same day as the console versions of Modern Warfare 2 which, in case you hadn't yet heard, is November 10th.

ANYTHING ELSE THAT WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

The game's being developed by World at War DS developer n-Space, so if you liked that game, you're bound to love this one, too. 

Latest
News



Best Bit

We loved being able to rain death from above in the original Modern Warfare, and Activision are implementing the same feature into Mobilised. Strap yourself into the AC-130 Gunship, line up the enemy in your night-vision-enabled sights and let rip!



Yes, that really is running on a DS.



You'll get to blow up your enemies with a tank. Just watch out for that Tankbuster!

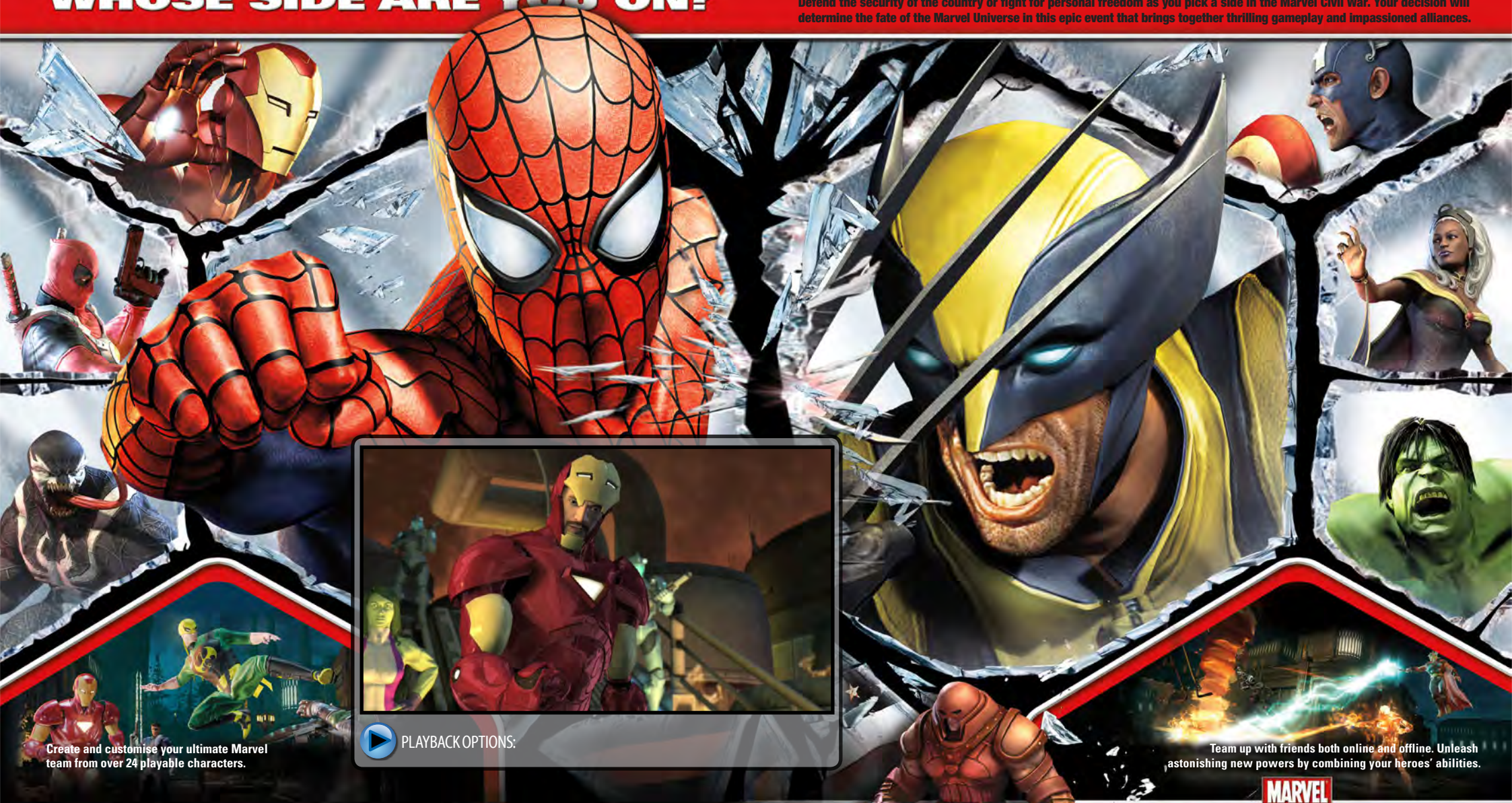


Crates: a staple part of every videogame.

WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

THE LARGEST ARMY OF SUPER HEROES IS BACK!

Defend the security of the country or fight for personal freedom as you pick a side in the Marvel Civil War. Your decision will determine the fate of the Marvel Universe in this epic event that brings together thrilling gameplay and impassioned alliances.



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 **PLAYBACK OPTIONS:**

AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER 25TH 2009



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INFO



FROM: Sega

A BIT LIKE... Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz

WEB: www.sega.co.uk/games/super-monkey-ball-step-and-roll

OUT: Early 2010



SUPER MONKEY BALL: STEP & ROLL

Time to dust off that Balance Board and get tilting!

Though it's never really been quite the same since the brilliant GameCube original, there's something about the announcement of a new Monkey Ball game that gets our anticipation gland tingling. Perhaps it's because that first game was so good, and that the sequels have failed to capture its simple pleasures that each new game offers the hope that Sega might one day recapture the lightning that it bottled so skilfully first time around.

After the disappointing Banana Blitz, the next Wii Monkey Ball could have gone two ways. Sega could have embraced the precision of Wii MotionPlus for more accurate tilting, or taken inspiration from Wii Fit's roll-the-balls-into-the-holes mini-game and utilised the balance board instead. It seems the latter is the main draw of the new game, although it's been suggested that players will be able to use a more traditional control method, too. Though the official site only

mentions the Wii Remote, we've heard that the alternative control scheme will use Remote and Nunchuk. Which, unless we're getting seriously ahead of ourselves, means a return to analogue stick control. If true, this is *fantastic* news, even if it seems that the level design will remain the same for both control methods, but with more obstacles introduced for the non-Balance Board control scheme.

In other words, it will still be some way off the original's exacting

challenges – though we imagine the later Balance Board levels will be a stern test of your leaning abilities. 🐒

The monkeys are still as cute as ever.

The board icon in the bottom-right shows your centre of balance.

MONKEY CALL

Predicting how Step & Roll will play



PORTION OF CHIMPS

APE ART

BANANA BONUS

A PORTION OF CHIMPS

AiAi, MeeMee, Baby and GonGon are all present and correct, and it's been confirmed that the classic Monkey Ball gameplay has been bolstered by mini-games. If we were betting men, we'd put money on there being fewer than the mini-game overkill of Banana Blitz, with Monkey Race definitely on the slate. Fingers crossed for Monkey Target.

HOW READY

HOW GOOD



Better than Banana Blitz, but can it beat the original?



"IT IS A THRILL TO CONTINUE
TO INSPIRE A NEW GENERATION"
- PELE



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:



THE FOOTBALL PARTY GAME FOR KIDS !
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www.pegi.info



Wii™



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WII PS2 DS PSP

incoming

We've seen the future of gaming, and it's good!

Dead Space: Extraction

FROM: EA OUT: October

Are you afraid of things that go bump in the night? Or things that like nothing better than chewing your face off? Answer yes to either and Dead Space: Extraction probably isn't for you. EA's first-person survival horror crams in the scares and ramps the gore factor up to 11 in this prequel to last year's 360/PS3 title that follows four characters as they attempt to find out the secrets behind the creatures that lie deep within the bowels of their mining vessel, the USG Ishimura.

WII

Spore Hero

FROM: EA OUT: October

Not to be confused with Activision's rockin' 'Hero' series, Spore Hero follows the evolutionary adventures of a custom-created creature who embarks on a quest to save its home planet from total annihilation. It's a Mario 64-alike platform spin-off to last year's fantastic PC title, meaning we'll be able to take our hero on a variety of adventures while continually evolving our character using the original game's stunning Creature Creator tool, which features hundreds of body parts players can use to shape their character however they want.

WII

LEGO indiana jones 2

FROM: Activision OUT: November

No longer restricting the player's movement to their current on-screen location, LEGO Indy 2 features an impressive split-screen feature that seamlessly morphs from split-screen to full-screen depending on each player's relative position. It's a revolutionary way to approach the interface for the LEGO series' renowned co-op and one that appears to work incredibly well, allowing players to solve puzzles and venture off independently as they continue the adventures of Dr. Jones and co.

WII PS2 DS PSP

LOCOROCO: MIDNIGHT CARNIVAL

FROM: Sony OUT: TBA

The LocoRocos are about to bounce, shake and shimmy their way back onto PSP in this download-only spin-off to one of our all-time favourite series. Having been awoken by the roguish BuiBui, Midnight Carnival sees our affable multi-coloured critters tackling numerous levels and mini-games in an attempt to get back to bed, using a new super 'Boing!' move that allow them to bounce higher than ever.

PSP

future releases

Best start saving! Here are the top games coming soon...

marvel: ultimate alliance 2

Wii, DS, PSP, PS2

September

mysims agents

Wii, DS

September

professor layton and pandora's box

DS

September

toy story: mania

Wii

September

gran turismo

PSP

October

fifa 10

Wii, DS, PSP, PS2

October

kingdom hearts 358/2 days

DS

October

Band Hero

FROM: Activision OUT: November



Activision's pop take on their popular music series shies away from the rock-heavy theme of Guitar Hero in favour of something much more family-friendly. Maroon 5 frontman Adam Levine joins up with American country-pop starlet Taylor Swift as playable characters, while the likes of Lily Allen, Jackson 5, Snow Patrol and Nelly Furtado bulk out the rest of the game's soundtrack. And, via one of the coolest accessories ever devised, the DS version even features drum support so you and your mates can jam while on the go.



invizimals

FROM: Sony OUT: November

Despite being on sale for over two years, the PSP's camera still hasn't really been put to very good use. Sony are looking to change all that with Invizimals, a game of a similar ilk to Pokémon that allows players to catch and battle a variety of different creatures. But there's a catch. Those of you trading in your old PSP for a shiny PSP Go won't be able to play Invizimals – at least not at first. Because the PSP's camera doesn't fit onto the sleeker PSPgo, Sony are working on an attachment to allow it to fit, but unfortunately that won't be ready in time for the game's launch in November.

LITTLEBIGPLANET

FROM: Sony OUT: Christmas

It may have lost its multiplayer component in the transition to handheld, but nevertheless LittleBigPlanet PSP is looking likely to provide as much charm, humour and entertainment as its home console big brother. The series' 'Play, Create, Share' adage returns, letting players create and share their own levels with others via PlayStation Network. And even if you lack the creative flair needed to come up with a level yourself, the 30 new levels created exclusively for the PSP version means that there'll be something for everyone when LBP launches later this year.



SCRIBBLENAUTS

FROM: Warner Bros. OUT: October

Do you want to know what happens when you put a dinosaur up against hordes of zombies? Or pit God against Zeus in a battle to the death? Or put a dashing young prince in a super car before whisking him through a time machine? Scribblenauts is a game that has to be seen to be believed, using a system that allows players to put anything they'd like into the game world to solve puzzles and create their own interactive experience.



future releases

More games heading your way in the not-so-near future

Mario & Sonic
At The Winter
Olympics
Wii, DS
October

Ghostbusters
Wii, DS, PSP
October

Marvel Super
Hero Squad
Wii, DS, PSP
October

PES 2010
PSP, PS2
November

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare
Wii, DS
November

Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines
PSP
November

DJ Hero
Wii
November

Cursed Mountain



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:



Wii

4th SEPTEMBER 2009
cursedmountain.deepsilver.com


DEEP SILVER

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info



FROM: Sony

A BIT LIKE: Ratchet & Clank

WEB: www.us.playstation.com/PSP/Games/Jak_and_Daxter_The_Lost_Frontier

OUT: Autumn



JAK & DAXTER: THE LOST FRONTIER

Jak in the box



Fed up of butt stomping, Jak now uses his trusty Gunstaff to see off enemies.

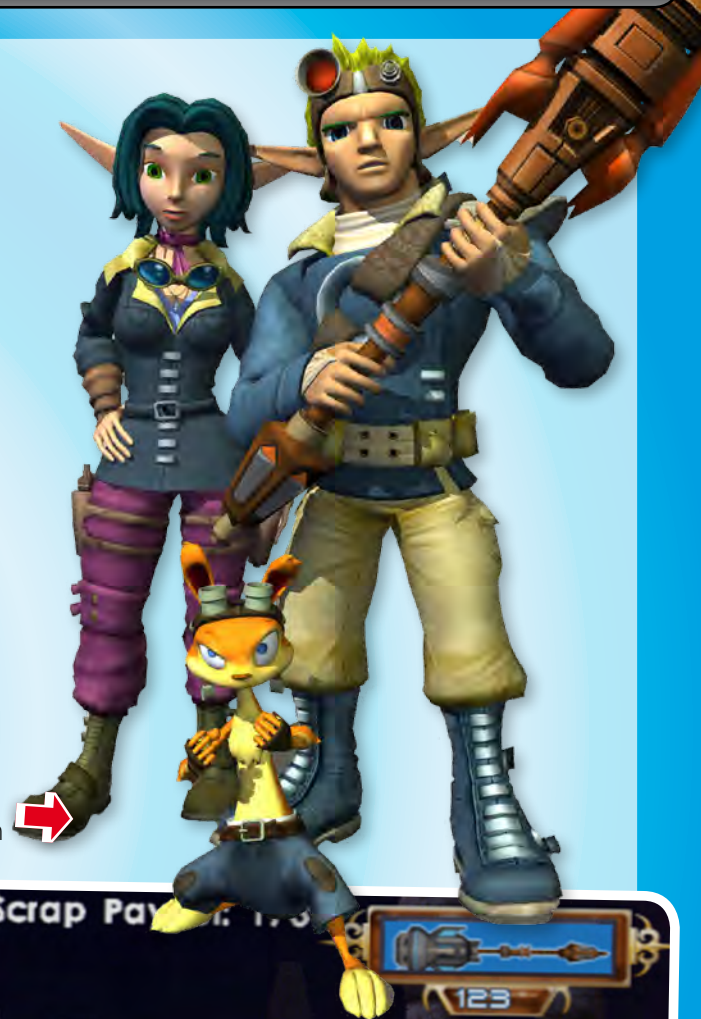
"IN A FIRST FOR THE SERIES, OUR HEROES WON'T BE RESTRICTED TO GROUND-BASED GAMEPLAY"

Jak's first foray onto the PSP takes him on a journey to a distant land which holds ancient technology needed to save his homeland from impending doom after the planet's lifeblood, the mysterious Eco, starts to drain away for good.

So The Lost Frontier's a game that has real-world connotations, but that doesn't mean that the series has lost its sense of humour or its fun factor in the translation to PSP. Jak & Daxter are just as charismatic as ever, joined by the lovely pointy-eared Keira and a host of brand new characters as they travel the globe to do battle with the pesky Aeropeans and track down the essential Precursor machinery.

In a first for the series, our heroes won't just be restricted to ground-based gameplay. Instead, they'll also be able to take to the skies in a variety of customisable aircraft, knocking those evil Sky Pirates out of the air who

threaten to thwart our legendary duo's plans. The Lost Frontier's aerial combat looks incredibly similar to that of the PS3 multiplayer game Warhawk, with the nimble aircraft able to perform a variety of tricks to outmanoeuvre Jak's foes before ripping them to pieces with



Yep, there's some big and powerful weapons to play with, too.



Aerial combat makes up a large proportion of The Lost Frontier.

its front-mounted laser cannons. There's said to be a 60/40 split between the series' traditional platform action and the new flight-based combat, so while you'll be firmly on the ground for the majority of the game, expect to strap yourself into the seat of one of the game's five gunships on numerous occasions.

But even when you're not tearing through the skies, you'll also have a variety of combat options available, thanks to Jak's transformable Gunstaff,

which can alter itself into a shotgun, rocket launcher and the meaty-sounding Shockwave Concussor. But Jak's not the only one that'll see a bit of action over the course of the game, of course. Though it's not yet entirely clear how exactly it fits into the storyline, Jak's wily Otsel buddy Daxter will be able to transform into 'Dark Daxter', a Hulk-alike character that sprouts vicious-looking spikes



We imagine Dark Daxter becomes playable after an experiment with Dark Eco goes badly wrong.



THE FINAL FRONTIER

Why TLF is our duo's greatest adventure yet!



open ended

UP, UP AND AWAY

ECO-FRIENDLY

open ended

Though there's an overarching story, The Lost Frontier features open-ended gameplay, which means you have the freedom to flick between story missions and optional missions whenever you like.

and huge muscles to brush past his foes with ease.

A game guaranteed to please both fans of the series and platformaholics alike, The Lost Frontier launches on PSP and PS2 this autumn.

HOW READY

HOW GOOD



Jak & Daxter bounce onto PSP in style

OUT SEPTEMBER 2009
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PLAYBACK OPTIONS:



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*Any reference to instruments - Guitars, Drums, or Microphones - refers to Guitar Hero controllers.
Online features not available on PlayStation[®]2

activision.com



CONTROL →



info



FROM: Nintendo
A BIT LIKE... Mario and Luigi: Partners in Time
WEB: <http://bowserinsidestory.com>
OUT: October 9th
ALSO ON: DS, PSP, PS2



MARIO & LUIGI BOWSER'S INSIDE STORY

The tach-sporting duo embark on a stomach-churning RPG adventure



Some of Bowser's specials require you to hold the DS horizontally.

? QUICK QUIZ!



They might make for an unlikely team, but the trio work well together.

Much of Mario and Luigi's latest portable adventure is spent in the belly of the beast – literally. Having gulped down some strange mushroom that turns him into a Koopa vacuum cleaner, Bowser swallows the two brothers, with the trio coming to an

uneasy truce as they search for the party responsible for their predicament, the player taking turns controlling Mario and Luigi together and then Bowser himself.

Thrillingly, the culprit is the English-spouting Fawful, memorable sidekick from Alphadream's first handheld role-player, the wonderful Superstar Saga. Elevated to main villain status, his dialogue – essentially a mickey-take of poorly-translated Japanese – is already looking like it'll provoke as many belly laughs as the first game. "I HAVE CHORTLES!" indeed...

The action is more varied and less linear than the slightly disappointing Partners in Time, with more platforming and puzzle-solving amid the fast-paced battles. These will still rely on well-timed button presses to enhance the effectiveness of your attacks, but Bowser gets some devastating stylus-based moves of his own.

Early reports of the Japanese version suggest this might be even better than Superstar Saga. If so, then this will be yet another DS must-have. We'll give you our verdict next month. 🐉



One unusual move sees Luigi inflate to epic proportions.

"EARLY REPORTS SUGGEST THAT THIS IS EVEN BETTER THAN GBA CLASSIC SUPERSTAR SAGA"

HOW READY
●●●●●●●●●●

HOW GOOD
●●●●●●●●●●

A hilarious and action-packed RPG – we can't wait

the HUMANS

MEET THE ANCESTORS!



HUNT IT DOWN
18TH SEPTEMBER 2009 AD



PC SCREENSHOTS

THEHUMANS.DEEPSILVER.COM

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PC DVD ROM

NINTENDO DS

DEEP SILVER



info



FROM: Square-Enix
A BIT LIKE: Kingdom Hearts II
WEB: <http://na.square-enix.com/khdays>
OUT: 9th October



The graphics look wonderful in motion.

KINGDOM HEARTS 358/2 DAYS

179 days' worth of fun?

The action is fast-paced and fluid – just like the PS2 games.

Plenty of familiar Disney characters make welcome returns.

These balloons contain a terrifying trick! Anyone who touches them is in

Crazy title, crazy game? Not quite, as we're on familiar action-RPG territory to anyone who's played a Kingdom Hearts game before. Crazy *plot* would be closer to the mark, as Square-Enix promises to baffle us to death by going back through time once more to fill in the gaps between Kingdom Hearts I and II. GBA title Chain of Memories might seem to have done a similar job, but this game focuses on Roxas, who series veterans will know as The Nobody of series protagonist Sora (see the FYI boxout for more info) and who formed the basis of the extended pre-credits section at the start of the second PS2 game. Which, depending on who you speak to, is a moving, elegiac sequence or four hours of utter boredom.

358/2 Days is closer to the PS2 games than the card-battling GBA offshoot, mostly using button controls as you wield the Keyblade alongside members of the shady Organisation XIII. There's a key new mechanic known as the Panel system, which basically offers a unique twist on character development as you build up your skills and special powers via a grid, wherein you slot augmentations you pick up on your journey. There are myriad combinations of items, while fitting certain elements together can have entirely unexpected effects.

Meanwhile, there's a multiplayer mode which offers the chance to link up with three other players to tackle sidequests and missions not available in the solo game – although any items collected or

F.Y.I.

For those who've not played a Kingdom Hearts game before, the idea of Nobodies might take a bit of explaining. Basically, a Nobody is a creature without a heart, brought into existence in human form when people lose their hearts to darkness – hence Roxas becoming Sora's Nobody in a moment during the first Kingdom Hearts when the hero's heart was temporarily lost. 358/2 Days tracks the build-up to the events in KHIII which see Roxas merge once more with Sora.



experience gained while battling with friends can be brought over to enhance Roxas in the single-player story mode.

Again you'll be battling through some beautiful recreations of famous Disney cartoon features – Neverland, Agrabah and Hallowe'en Town are all in there – making this one not to miss for fans of classic animation, as well as those who've been following Roxas' story so far. 🍷

HOW READY

HOW GOOD



A thrilling and good-looking DS RPG

info



FROM: Sony
A BIT LIKE: DIRT
WEB: www.us.playstation.com/PSP/Games/MotorStorm_Arctic_Edge
OUT: Autumn



MOTORSTORM ARCTIC EDGE

MotorStorm breaks the ice on PSP!

Trust us, staying on the track is going to take all your driving skill.



"MOTORSTORM HAS SWITCHED FROM ITS CHARACTERISTIC SAND DUNES FOR ARCTIC TUNDRAS"

Sony invites us back for another year on the track as the MotorStorm Festival heads off from the big screen and into the palm of your hand. But for its first game on the PSP, MotorStorm has switched from its characteristic sand dunes for arctic tundras, its sun and sea for snow and ice, and its grittier gravel for slippery slush.

It's a good job, then, that we're being given all-new vehicles with which to traverse the icy wasteland, including a ridiculously large snow plow that can force other racers off of the icy tracks with just the gentlest of nudges, and a nimble little snow cat that can whip around each course with ease. There are 12 courses in all, each based around different areas of the Alaskan landscape, and with names like The Chasm, Widow Maker and Eagle Falls, we can rest easy in the knowledge that they'll all be as

So that's why the ice caps are melting...



Roll over screen for annotations



info



The snow plow is Arctic Edge's equivalent to Pacific Rift's monster trucks.

gleefully menacing and unpredictable as those in the previous MotorStorm games. But watching out for other racers eager to bump you off the side of the cliff-face isn't the only thing you'll have to be aware of in Arctic Edge. The game introduces a variety of environmental hazards to the series, including collapsing ice bridges and avalanches, which can be triggered by either you or your rivals sounding your horn. It's a feature likely to create a few

laughs during the game's multiplayer mode, where players can duke it out to become king of the road in eight-player online battles. Arctic Edge has all the makings of a heart-pumping PSP racer then, and if it plays anything like its bigger PS3 brothers, we're likely to have a certified hit on our hands when the game launches this autumn.

The chasm? Sounds like trouble to us.



"ARCTIC EDGE HAS ALL THE MAKINGS OF A HEART-PUMPING PSP RACER"



Best Bit

Though we like to pretend that we're just racing for a place at the top of the leaderboard, in our hearts MotorStorm has always been about the sheer destruction and mindless glee of ramming other racers off the road. And with that in mind, Arctic Edge certainly doesn't disappoint with vehicles exploding in a sea of smoke and flames!



Kicking Up A Storm

The art of brutal off-road racing...



SUB ZERO

CUSTOM BUILT

POSTCARD MOMENT

SUB ZERO

As well as battling against the hordes of other racers and the environmental hazards, you'll also have to contend with the horrendous weather conditions, including snow storms, wind and torrential rain.

HOW READY

HOW GOOD

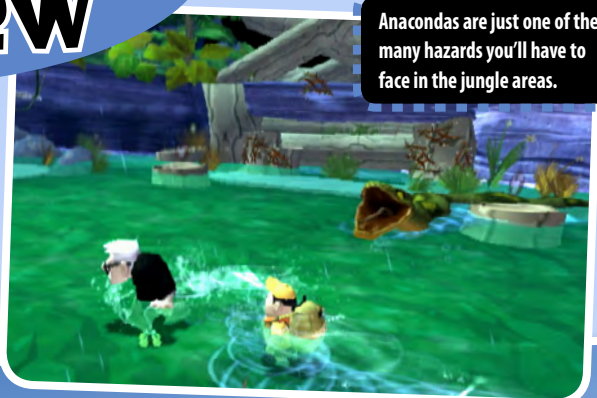


Arctic Edge looks great so far

INFO



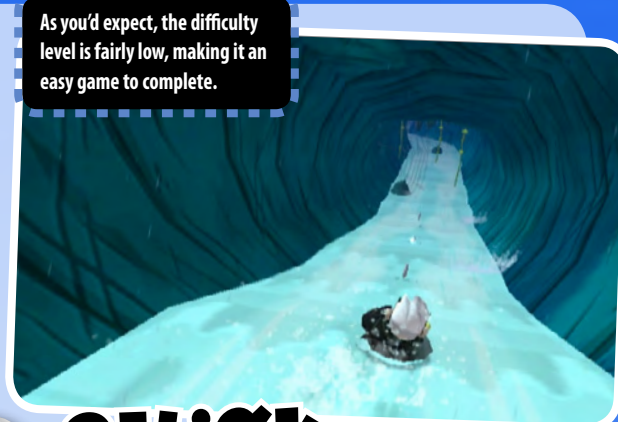
FROM: THQ
A BIT LIKE... Wall-E
WEB: www.
upvideogame.com
OUT: 25th September
ALSO ON: DS, PSP, PS2



Anacondas are just one of the many hazards you'll have to face in the jungle areas.



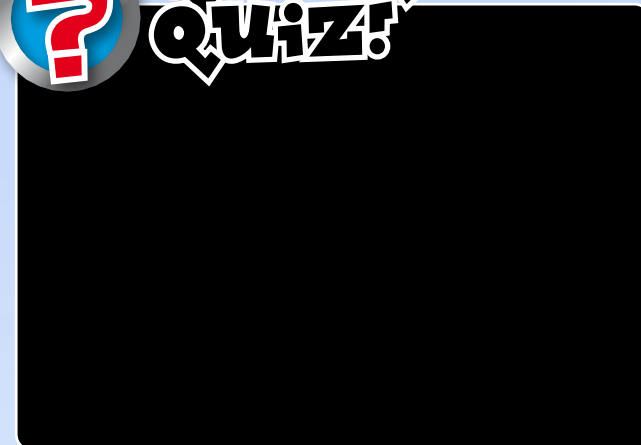
The dogfights use the remote pointer to control the plane.



As you'd expect, the difficulty level is fairly low, making it an easy game to complete.



QUICK QUIZ!



Disney-Pixar's latest animated classic gets the videogame treatment

Annoyingly, us Europeans have had to wait patiently for Up (the film) to arrive, meaning that Up (the game), like its cinematic inspiration, has actually been out for a while.

On the Wii at least, it's an action-adventure vaguely reminiscent of Lego Star Wars and other such co-operative adventures. Like those games you take control of one character while the AI handles the other members of the group until you need to switch between them to use their skills to overcome certain enemies or obstacles. The three leads are grumpy old duffer Carl, enthusiastic young cub scout

Russell, and their pet dog Dug, though you'll eventually meet prehistoric bird Kevin as you trek through the wilds of South America.

Like most licensed games, it occasionally introduces brief diversions from the basic gameplay – like a slide down some rapids, or a dogfighting sequence reminiscent of the mode in Wii Sports Resort – it's available to play in multiplayer, though it trumps

Nintendo's game, in that four players can join in rather than just two.

Like most games aimed at a younger market, it seems to be quite a short-lived experience – hopefully the multiplayer options can extend its lifespan.

"ITS DOGFIGHTING MODE TRUMPS THE OFFERING IN WII SPORTS RESORT - WITH SUPPORT FOR FOUR PLAYERS"

HOW READY

HOW GOOD



An engaging tie-in for younger gamers

INFO



FROM: Activision
A BIT LIKE...

Guitar Hero On Tour

WEB: www.bandhero.com

OUT: November

ALSO ON: Wii, PS2



BAND HERO



The game features a number of mini-games in the competitive play modes.



The DS 'drum skin' slots neatly over the console, the tiny pads offering a more tactile feel to the percussion parts.

QUICK QUIZ

The dreaded guitar grip returns once more to taunt our aching fingers.



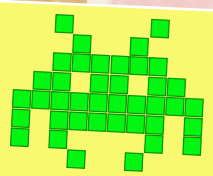
Activision adds drums and vocals to the Guitar Hero mix

Each portable Guitar Hero game has seen Vicarious Visions make subtle improvements to a game which was arguably a bad idea from the start. But regardless of how silly it feels, and ignoring for a minute the shooting pain we get in our fingers whenever we play the games for more than half-an-hour at a time, the On Tour series offers plenty of fun – a kind of Guitar Hero redux experience, if you like. It doesn't quite transport you into the shoes of a rock star like the home console games can, but then again, it's much easier to carry around with you, even if playing it on the

train does elicit a few strange looks from your fellow commuters.

With Band Hero, VV is looking to recreate the full band experience on handheld – an ambitious undertaking to say the least. This time the Guitar Grip is used for two instruments – lead guitar and bass – while a brand new Drum Skin slides over your DS Lite (sorry DSi owners, you'll have to sit this one out) allowing you to tap out a rhythm via pads positioned over the face buttons. Vocals are handled by singing into the DS mic, and you can link up locally with up to three others for a portable jam session.

With tween faves like Maroon 5's Adam Levine and Taylor Swift as playable characters and more than 30 songs to master, this will likely be sitting at the top of a great many want lists this Christmas.



"TWEEN FAVOURITES LIKE MAROON 5'S ADAM LEVINE AND TAYLOR SWIFT FEATURE AS PLAYABLE CHARACTERS"

HOW READY

HOW GOOD



Could well be the best portable Hero to date

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info

ASSASSIN'S
CREED
BLOODLINES

FROM: Ubisoft
A BIT LIKE:

Metal Gear Solid

WEB: www.ubi.com/US/Games/Info.aspx?pid=7778

OUT: 20th November



ASSASSIN'S CREED: BLOODLINES

Can Altair make a killing on PSP?

EXCLUSIVE
SHOTS!

Sometimes even Altair himself has to stop and look at the beauty of it all.



Combat is neatly done and intuitive, so you'll never feel frustrated when you're under attack from a lack of control.

"We're HAPPY TO REPORT THAT BLOODLINES IS A TOTALLY FREE-ROAMING OPEN-WORLD ADVENTURE"

Just when you thought that Altair, the assassin from the original Assassin's Creed had disappeared forever (he's replaced in the second game by the exotically named Ezio Auditore di Firenze), here comes Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines, a game that not only marks the return of Altair, but also works as a very neat segue between the two game. Picking up the storyline right after the events of the first game, it explains the origins of not only Ezio but also the Codex, too.

But enough of such matters, as what you really want to know is how the game actually plays. Well, thankfully we're happy to report that Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines is – unlike the impressive but linear AC: Altair's Chronicles on the DS – a totally free-roaming open-world adventure. Set on the island of Cyprus, you'll have the chance to explore a number of

MEETING 'THE BULL'
Want to see the game in action?
Press play on the right to get a glimpse of Bloodlines on the PSP.



info

ASSASSIN'S
CREED
BLOODLINES



Altair has a range of cunningly concealed weapons with which to dispose of the knights.



"It's clear that **BLOODLINES** is a **VERY AMBITIOUS GAME FOR THE PSP**"

→ large cities, including Limasol and Kyrenia. And while the game engine's draw distance obviously isn't quite as impressive as that of the original next-gen game, you can still see a great deal of your surroundings

when you climb your way up to the top of a building.

Which is a very good point, as the glory of Assassin's Creed has always been the ability to scale any building you wish by shimmying up the side of it or flying between beams, and you

Find a well-placed hay cart and you'll be able to leap to safety from any height.



can do all that here.

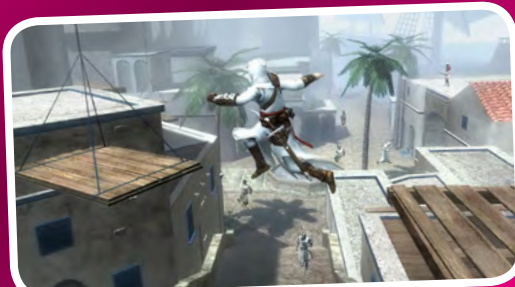
You can also dispatch your foes – of which there are many – with a neat range of concealed weapons. And, if you connect this game up with Assassin's Creed II on the PS3, you get to unlock special exclusive weapons, too!

From what we know, it's clear that Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines is a very ambitious game for the PSP. It's also clear that some of the complaints of the first game (pretty but little substance) are being addressed, so if Ubisoft are able to tighten up the gameplay and give us a game that looks as special as we suspect that it might, then we could be looking at a very special gem indeed here. Hopefully we'll be able to bring you a much longer look at this stunning-looking game next month. 🗡️



BEST BIT

You may like the tighter gameplay or you might even be impressed by the excellent and well-written storyline, but the truth is that the best bit of Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines is the graphics. They impress you from the start and keep you enamoured until the very end.



HOW READY

HOW GOOD

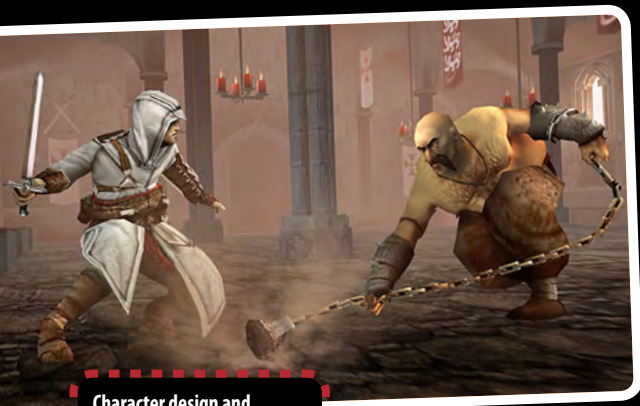


Can the gameplay match the graphics? Hope so

interview

BLOOD TIES

Assassin's Creed Bloodlines has the potential to be one of the best PSP games yet. We talked to the developers to find out exactly why...



Character design and animation will be faultless.



Yes, this really is a shot from AC Bloodlines on the PSP.

Bloodlines is set after Assassin's Creed, but before the sequel. How far after the first game is it set?

Assassin's Creed Bloodlines picks up right where Assassin's Creed ended as Altair hunts down the ascending Templars in Cyprus. The ending of AC Bloodlines doesn't precede the opening of Assassin's Creed II but the storyline will enable players to understand how Ezio is born and where the codex comes from.

Will Altair have access to the same moves in Bloodlines that he had in the original Assassin's Creed? Has he learned new moves since?

Once again, Altair will have to master his environment and you can perform all of his signature moves plus some new moves and mission types. You can expect to enjoy the core gameplay of the original Assassin's Creed, with increased mission variety, plus we've integrated new challenges

into the Assassination gameplay. Most of your targets will have their own unique AI that will force you to adapt your stealth and combat strategy in order to beat 'the baddies'. The new boss-like targets and new mission types mean that the PSP version is jam-packed with a lot of juicy new features that fans were asking for.

Why have you chosen to feature Altair as Bloodlines' main character, rather than Assassin's Creed II's Ezio?

There was a petition on the Internet for a PSP version of Assassin's Creed so we thought 'why not make the fans happy and put Altair on PSP?' This decision helped us from a brand perspective too, because we feel like it's important to explain the link between Desmond's various ancestors. We have answers for why Desmond needs to relive Ezio's life

after Altair's but we didn't have a place to explain all of those links. Adding to Altair's story through a PSP version gave us that chance.



Will Bloodlines still feature an open-world environment, and if so, how does it compare in size with the original game's environments? How many environments are there?



interview



Zippering around the rooftops is the secret to getting around unnoticed.

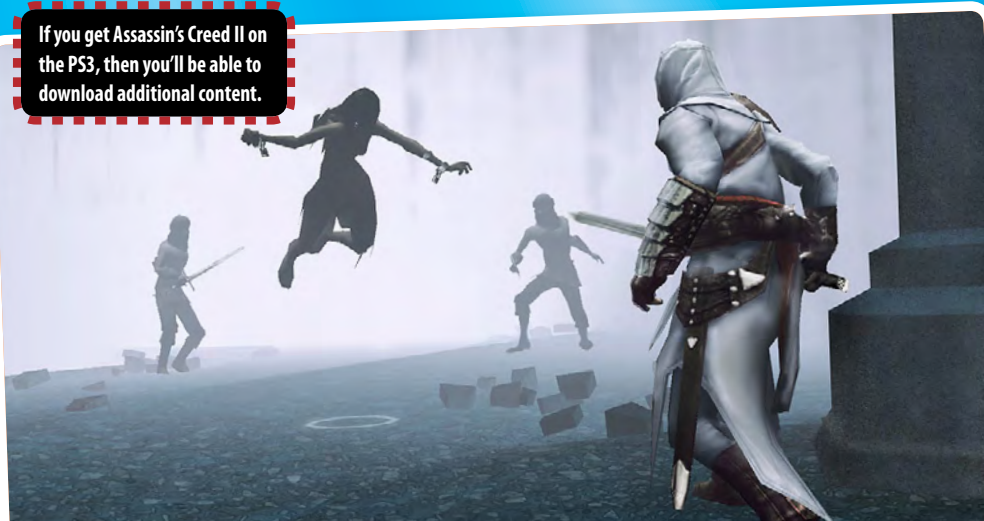
"ASSASSIN'S CREED BLOODLINES PICKS UP RIGHT WHERE ASSASSIN'S CREED ENDED"

→ INTERVIEW CONTINUED

Bloodlines will feature an open-world environment. In fact, Altair will

free-run, sprint, fly between beams and climb everywhere to take advantage of his surroundings. This is

If you get Assassin's Creed II on the PS3, then you'll be able to download additional content.



a huge benchmark technology-wise, as this kind of freedom of movement has never been seen on the PSP.

As was the case in Assassin's Creed, Altair will get to explore large cities. This time around he'll discover the cities of Limasol and Kyrenia in Cyprus, a beautiful and historically interesting island that's based in the Mediterranean Sea. Each city is composed of a minimum of four districts.

Directly comparing the size of each city would be tricky, as both games were not developed with the same technology. However, what is important at the end of the day is that the player will have the same experience of freedom on the PSP that he had playing Assassin's Creed on the next-gen consoles.

Bloodlines connects with the PS3 version of Assassin's Creed II to allow players to share items between each version. What sort of bonuses can players unlock by hooking up Bloodlines to Assassin's Creed II?

There are several bonuses players will be able to unlock for both AC Bloodlines on the PSP and Assassin's Creed II on the PS3 by using the connectivity feature. For example, players in AC Bloodlines will unlock Hidden Blade improvements. Let me explain: In Assassin's Creed II, collecting the Hidden Blade Codices will provide Ezio with information about the Assassin's Hidden Blade passed down through the generations. Selecting Codices in

Assassin's Creed II will unlock similar abilities for Altair in AC Bloodlines. Similar to the Hidden Blade improvements, collecting the Life Codices in Assassin's Creed II will allow up to a 25% bonus to Altair's total health.

Also, in AC Bloodlines, each of Altair's assassination targets has a unique weapon to share with ACII. As Altair eliminates the Templar Commanders in Cyprus, their signature weapons become a part of his legacy to his descendants. By linking to the PS3, players put those weapons into the hands of Ezio hundreds of years later. Players will also be able to unlock three different types of Templar Coins (Bronze, Silver and Gold) within AC Bloodlines, each with a different value to Ezio in Assassin's Creed II.

One of Assassin's Creed's greatest assets was its incredible visuals. Considering the PSP's comparatively weaker hardware, how have you approached that when developing Bloodlines? Have you had to scale back the graphics substantially?

Obviously translating a game that was designed for the next generation consoles from the ground up on a PSP is quite a challenge. However, with AC Bloodlines we really pushed the PSP to its limit, and we were surprised by the quality of the graphics. In fact, we feel that AC Bloodlines will offer PSP owners a similar experience to Assassin's Creed on the PS3. 🚫



FROM: Ubisoft

A BIT LIKE: Metal Gear Solid

WEB: www.ubi.com/US/Games/Info.aspx?pid=7778

ETA: 20th November



info



FROM: Deep Silver
A BIT LIKE... Silent Hill
WEB: <http://cursedmountain.deepsilver.com>
PRICE: £34.99
PEGI AGE RATING: 16+



Cursed Mountain

Cursed or blessed? It's time for the review...

So, we've climbed the mountain, learnt more about Buddhist philosophy than we thought we ever would and uncovered the secrets behind the story of missing climber Frank Simmonds, but now that the snow has settled on our coverage of this chilly survival horror game, what do we actually think of Cursed Mountain?

To recap very briefly, you play Eric Simmonds, a climber who travels to the Himalayas to find out the truth behind the disappearance of his brother, Frank. The story slowly reveals itself as you climb up the mountain towards the peak, and there are plenty of jumps along the way as you encounter the lost souls from the villages scattered on the mountain.

Expect minor puzzling, plenty of spirit exorcising – with quick-time event style breaks where you have to match the movements with your Remote and Nunchuk to free the spirit – and, as this is a Wii-exclusive game, some clever use of the Remote, too.

Cursed Mountain excels in its atmospheric storyline, very impressive graphics and the care and thought put into the gameplay. We also liked the fact that this was far from a gratuitous slasher horror game, instead preferring to take its influence from J-horror films where shocks and spine-tingling fear rule supreme.

This, as you might expect, is Eric Simmonds – the hero of the game.

The atmospheric graphics are stunning throughout.



On the downside though, it isn't a game that's likely to take you long (roughly 10 hours in fact), and with no other game modes or multiplayer options, there's nothing there to keep you playing. If Deep Silver can give us a bigger sequel with online options, then they could be onto a winner. ❄️

Roll over screen for annotations



Briefly speaking

Survival horror comes back to the Wii in style, with a scary, spooky game with a difference. Its 16-plus rating is purely down to the edge-of-the-seat shocks rather than any gratuitous blood and gore.

PLAY TIME

HOURS

DAYS

WEEKS

DIFFICULTY

EASY

MEDIUM

ARRGH!

FUN FACTOR

DULL

COOL

YIPPEE!

VERDICT

Spine-tingling fun!

8



info



FROM: Nintendo
A BIT LIKE... Professor Layton and the Curious Village
WEB: www.nintendo.co.uk/NOE/en_GB/games/nds/professor_layton_and_pandoras_box_13573.html
PRICE: £29.99
PEGI AGE RATING: 7+



The luxurious train known as The Molenary Express is where Layton's journey begins.

PROFESSOR LAYTON and Pandora's Box

"That was oh-most too easy!"



A few familiar faces from St. Mystere return...

LAYTON: "A TRUE GENTLEMAN LEAVES NO PUZZLE UNSOLVED."

Yes, *that* accent is back. Puzzle apprentice Luke's amusing mangling of the word 'almost' is just one of many highlights in this sterling sequel to the surprise DS smash hit of the last 12 months. That game's sales meant that the translation of the second in Level 5's massive-in-Japan series was never going to take as long to reach European shores as the original did. And here it is.

But following so hard on the heels of that instant classic has its downsides. There's a definite air of familiarity about key aspects of the game. The structure is identical, a handful of puzzles are little more than tweaked versions of riddles found in the first game, and there's the unshakeable feeling that it's all following a fairly rigid formula. Heck, the final third of the game might as well be called Professor Layton and Yet Another Curious Village.

But innovation (or lack thereof) be damned. Layton's sophomore journey is like an old blanket – looking a little tatty around the edges, but once it

envelops you in its warm embrace you won't ever want to emerge. It's just immensely charming, filled with content – the new hamster, tea-set and camera mini-games will keep you occupied for hours alone – and as fist-clenchingly satisfying as ever when you finally get your head round a particularly fiendish brainteaser. Whenever you see Layton or Luke smile, you will too. Oh, and the story is really *fantastic*, with a closing act reveal that's both surprising and surprisingly touching at the same time.

Chuck in a few presentational flourishes (including some marvellous animated cut-scenes) and you have a sequel that – oh, go on then – *just* about tops its predecessor. **WE**

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

More of the same? Yes, but in our book, and in this case, that's no bad thing at all. More puzzles, more cut-scenes, more... everything, really. And, yes, more brilliant than the first.

TOP TIP

The camera Sammy gives you to piece together opens up a new mini-game when it's completed, so it's worth fixing. There's a subtle aural cue to let you know when you've placed a piece correctly – listen out for a slightly weightier 'click' noise and you'll know you've hit the spot.



PLAY TIME HOURS DAYS WEEKS	DIFFICULTY EASY MEDIUM ARRGH!	FUN FACTOR DULL COOL YIPPEE!	VERDICT A brainy belter



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info



FROM: Electronic Arts
 A BIT LIKE... Rock Band 2
 WEB: www.thebeatlesrockband.com
 PRICE: £39.99
 PEGI AGE RATING: 12+



The Beatles: ROCK Band

Can't buy me love – I've spent too much on the Premium Bundle

Yes, it's expensive. If you want the full, authentic Beatles Rock Band experience, it's going to cost you more than a pretty penny. On the other hand, if you just fancy picking up the best band-specific music game of the year and playing it with any of the existing plastic instruments cluttering up your lounge, you can do. In which case, 40 quid gets you 45 Beatles tracks, a wealth of trivia, some archive photos and recordings, and a few secrets

besides. And just about the most impressive presentation we think we've ever seen in a videogame. Not a bad tribute to the Fab Four, right?

Well, yes and no. It should feel like a bargain – and for those ecstatic opening chapters, it does. Playing as John, Paul, George or Ringo (or all of them if you've enough friends or family present) you're facing screaming audiences on the Ed Sullivan show and in Shea Stadium, belting out classics like I Want to Hold Your Hand or Ticket to Ride. Despite the band's unique career arc which saw them abandon

the big gigs to make magic in the studio, the Abbey Road sessions are somehow *even better* thanks to the Dreamscapes – seriously fantastic visual interpretations of each song. Harmonix have outdone themselves here.

But things fall flat right at the end. A weak final gig is followed by a lengthy credits roll which seems to be building up to something big. It isn't. EA has saved a lot of the best stuff for DLC, sadly – compromising what could and should have been a 10/10 game. That it's not far off is testament to Harmonix's expert craft, making this perhaps the best disappointment you'll ever play. 🐘



The caricatured avatars are superb.



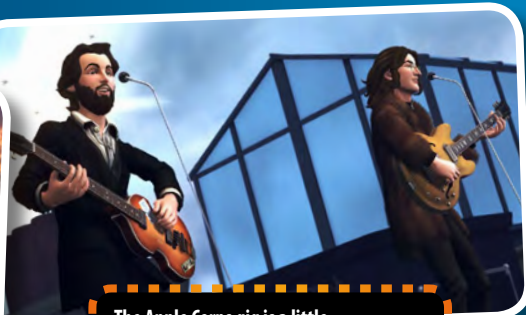
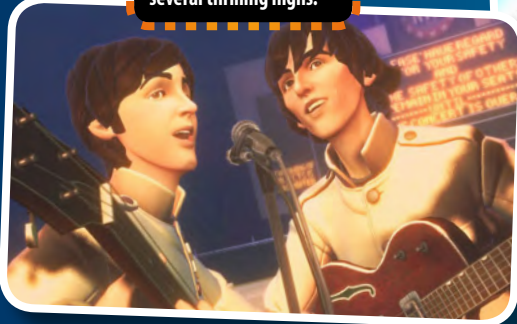
Sergeant Pepper's 'dreamscape' sequence is a clear highlight.



PLAYZINE Challenge

It's not even considered to be one of the most difficult songs (it's Challenging rather than Demanding, apparently) but Here Comes the Sun requires some seriously nifty fretwork. See if you can five-star the song on Hard or above – it's a lot harder than it sounds, believe us.

Shea Stadium is one of several thrilling highs.



The Apple Corps gig is a little anti-climactic and lacking in atmosphere.

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

Not quite as brilliant as the band or its developer deserves. The Beatles: Rock Band will be some of the happiest hours of gaming you'll have this year. Only a damp squib of an ending dulls the joy.



PLAY TIME

HOURS

DAYS

8 DAYS
a WEEK

DIFFICULTY

EASY

I FEEL
FINE

ARRGH!

FUN FACTOR

DULL

COOL

GOO GOO
GLOOB

VERDICT

Beatlemania
is back!

9



CONTROL



info



FROM: Deep Silver
ABIT LIKE... the turntable mini-game in Wario Ware Touched
WEB: N/A
PRICE: £29.99
PEGI AGE RATING: 12+



DJ Star

It was acceptable at the time...

We have to admit that the idea of the superstar DJ doesn't sit particularly well with us. I mean, how hard can playing someone else's records – and occasionally swapping them over – really be? Well, if DJ Star is anything to go by, it's actually a lot more difficult than it looks.

The game starts with your created avatar feeling similarly nonplussed – turned away from a club while watching a VIP, the cheesily named DJ Mastakilla, stroll

right in. Curious, you buy a set of cheap decks and start playing to friends in your bedroom before filling in at parties and graduating to headlining club nights. You have a collection of records which expands as you progress, and you need to place them on the left and right platters, mixing between them with a crossfader switch while making sure their BPM (beats per minute for the uninitiated) matches up.



This touchscreen mini-game apparently makes the gig more atmospheric.



As you progress you'll unlock new looks for your DJ.

Timing your fades is something of a fine art.



Get enough people up on the dancefloor and you'll complete the stage.



Slowly, additional layers are piled on – you'll need to scratch a disc occasionally to prove you're not just standing there doing nothing, and then you'll be asked to add samples, or play touchscreen mini-games to increase the party atmosphere.

Trouble is, it all feels a little capricious – you're rewarded and punished seemingly at random, and while the music selection is pleasingly varied and there's a neat tune creation feature, ultimately, DJ Star just doesn't quite live up to its potential.

TOP TIP

You need to watch out for the yellow flash which shows you what you should be doing next, whether it's fading between records, adding samples or scratching. And don't forget to tap on the record names to find out their BPM so you can match the speed up manually for extra points.



BRIEFLY SPEAKING

When you're creating a racket and the crowd is going wild, you know something's gone wrong. DJ Star has some great ideas, but it falls down slightly in its execution. Not a disaster, but it could have been so much more.

PLAY TIME

HOURS

DAYS

WEEKS

DIFFICULTY

EASY

MEDIUM

ARRGH!

FUN FACTOR

DULL

COOL

YIPPEE!

VERDICT

Fun for a while

6

COMPO CORNER

Want something for nothing? Then enter our fab competition!

Win yourself a Wii, PLUS COPIES OF CURSED MOUNTAIN!

If you've followed our coverage of Cursed Mountain over the last few months then you know that we've become rather fond of this original survival horror game. And now, thanks to Deep Silver, one lucky winner will get the chance to play the game for themselves for free! And fear not if you've yet to get yourself a Wii, as we're giving away one of those, too. Five runners-up will also win a copy of the game.

Cursed Mountain is set in the Himalayas, and follows the story of Eric Simmonds as he tries to uncover the mystery of his brother's disappearance while out climbing. Featuring unique gameplay, superb graphics and spine-tingling set-pieces, Cursed Mountain is a survival horror game with more than its fair share of chills and surprises.

To be in with a chance of winning one of these fantastic prizes, simply answer the question over on the right. And the very best of luck!



Next month

MODERN WARFARE

Everything you need to know
about the Wii and DS games!

PLUS!

FIFA 10 COLIN MCRAE: DIRT 2 MOTOSTORM ARCTIC EDGE
GUITAR HERO 5 GRAN TURISMO

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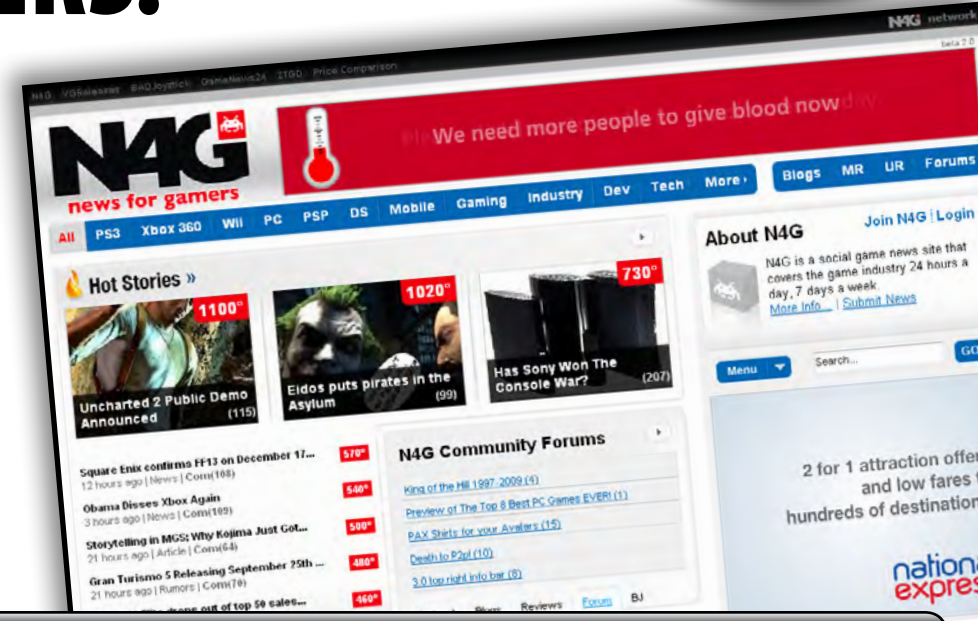
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SUPPLEMENT**



Cursed Mountain

THE MAGAZINE

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF PLAYZINE

**EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW!**
The developers
speak



EXCLUSIVE PLAYTEST

HORROR IN THE HIMALAYAS

Can you survive the Wii's scariest game yet?



Cursed Mountain



WELCOME

It may have something to do with the Wii's naturally family-friendly image, or it may just be that developers aren't quick to exploit the possibilities for horror on Nintendo's console, but the truth is that, while frights and chills are commonplace on other consoles, they're relatively few and far between on the Wii.

This, we feel, is a great shame. Why? Well, for the simple reason that despite the Wii lacking slightly in the graphics department, the genius control method that is the combination of the Remote and Nunchuk lends itself to some stunning gameplay possibilities.

From the very first scenes in Cursed Mountain to the final dramatic battle, it's clear that this is a game that's been given more care and thought than usual. Mixing videogame action with Eastern religious philosophy is something that's been rarely tried, yet after playing the game you may wonder why.

With a stunning storyline that slowly unravels as you wind your way up the mountain (and closer to the truth about your brother's disappearance), fantastic graphics and some very neat control touches, Cursed Mountain is a game that will stay with you long after you've completed it.

The object of this guide then (via the medium of words, pictures and video) is to give you the full picture of what to expect. So read on, enjoy, and hopefully at the end you'll understand why we think that Cursed Mountain could be one of the most entertaining (and terrifying!) Wii games you'll play this year.

Enjoy the issue,

Dean Mortlock

Contents

Playtest 03

We've completed the game, lifted the curse and made it down to base camp in one piece, just so we can bring you the definitive playtest of Cursed Mountain.

Interview 08

Need to know more about the game? Thankfully, we know just the man to ask.

"Cursed Mountain could be one of the most entertaining (and terrifying!) Wii games you'll play this year"



Cursed Mountain



HANDS ON

CURSED MOUNTAIN

We can move, move, move any mountain...

Publisher:

Deep Silver

Developer:

Deep Silver

Heritage: Jacked,

Iron Soldier 3

Link: <http://cursedmountain.deepsilver.com>

ETA: 4th September

Since our first tentative look at Cursed Mountain (from behind the sofa with a cushion over our eyes, obviously), we've been quietly watching out for this one. Was it the Himalayan setting that intrigued us? The mixture of Western gameplay and Eastern religion? Or maybe that fact that this was a survival horror game in the truest sense – heavy on the

horror and surviving and very light on the blood and gore. Actually, it's almost certainly a mixture of all three that initially hooked us, deftly blended into an atmospheric action/adventure game, the likes of which you probably haven't seen before.

THE FIRST CLIMB

We took our first climb up Cursed Mountain in PlayZine magazine two months ago (head over to www.gamerzines.com to download the back issue – and check out the latest issue while you're there as well, for our massive cover feature), and came away wanting more, so with the Wii fired up, the phone off the hook, the curtains drawn and our horror gland squeezed, we relished the opportunity to sit down for an extended play session. And you know what? We're still impressed.



Graphically, this is hugely impressive.

First things first, Cursed Mountain is a survival horror game, but one with a difference. Rather than have you running around a smoke-shrouded



"Cursed Mountain is a survival horror game, but one with a difference"

Upgrading your axe gives you improved abilities.



Cursed Mountain



"There's clearly been a great deal of care and attention put into Cursed Mountain"

Full of character

Three of the game's main protagonists



Eric



Frank



Paul



Eric Simmons

Eric's an experienced high altitude climber and well-known in the international climbing community. He cares a lot for his brother Frank, especially since he thinks that his brother is a bit overambitious when climbing. He somehow thinks that his brother will get in trouble one day...

Eric is a down-to-earth character and has serious trouble believing what he is seeing when he encounters the first ghosts in the valley.

> Cursed Mountain cont.

town or zombie-infested city, Cursed Mountain takes the more sedate option of having our central character (Eric Simmons) climbing the Himalayan mountain of Chomolongo in a desperate search for his brother Frank, who disappeared up it while on a climbing expedition of his own. Naturally though, it's not quite as straightforward as that, and it quickly becomes apparent that there's considerably more behind Frank's disappearance than you might have originally believed.

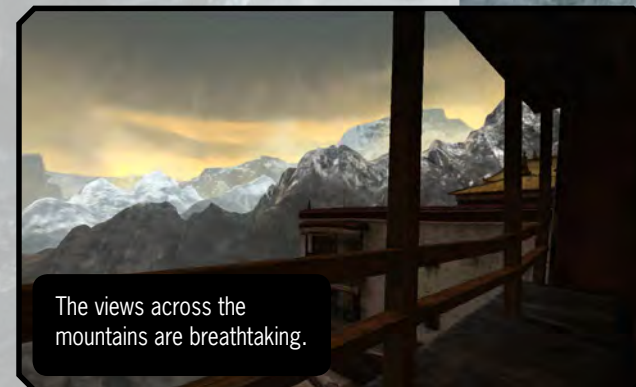


This is Eric Simmons, on a desperate attempt to find his lost brother.

Frank went missing while searching for a 'Terma' – which is described as a hidden treasure in Buddhist teachings – that's been hidden somewhere at the summit

of the mountain. Clearly an object of great power and importance, your thoughts are purely with rescuing Frank, but will you be corrupted on your journey? Only time will tell...

There's clearly been a great deal of care and attention put into Cursed Mountain. Graphically, it's very impressive for the Wii. The



The views across the mountains are breathtaking.



Cursed Mountain

> Cursed Mountain cont.

locations you have to guide Eric through look stunning, and despite the fact that for a lot of the game you're climbing up the side of a mountain, the developers have gone out of their way to avoid it being a bleak and empty experience – in fact, it's quite the opposite, with multiple paths and breathtaking views across the Himalayan mountain range.

But there's so much more to the game than a clever plot and fancy graphics. While the main objective of Cursed Mountain is to find your brother, how you get there is the clever part. Very early



You'll bump into this character towards the end of the game.

"Cursed Mountain is steeped in Buddhist and Eastern philosophy"



on, you realise that the key to your survival in this particular horror is learning how to 'release' the many spirits that attack you. Mostly shadowy spectres, they require the use of your adapted axe tool and 'third eye' to target them. Then, after you've weakened them with a few well-placed shots, you have a quicktime-style event involving a series of onscreen slash movements with the Remote and Nunchuk to release them from 'Bardo', the dimension they've become trapped in.

It sounds ethereal, and that's because it is. The game is steeped in Buddhist and Eastern philosophy, so devices like the ability to regain health at one of the many shrines – and you'll need to collect a stock of incense sticks too, as each



Full of character #2

Three more to watch out for...



Edward



Jomo



Mingma



Edward A. Bennett

Edward's experiments with the occult and drugs have made it possible for him to temporarily enter the Bardo in a near-death-experience. He is able to leave his body and appear as a ghost, which allows him to use powers not available to mere humans.

Bennett used the expedition that Franz took part in as a means to get hold of the mysterious Terma, an ancient Buddhist treasure that he thinks will make him immortal.

Cursed Mountain

> Cursed Mountain cont.

one recovers a chunk of health – shouldn't surprise you, and the plain of existence the souls of the dead are trapped in is the aforementioned Bardo which, in Buddhist terms, is the 'transitional state' between the living and the dead – you'll find that Bardo plays a much bigger part in the game towards the end, too.

WII EXCLUSIVE

Cursed Mountain has been developed exclusively for the Wii, and it shows. Making full use of the Remote and Nunchuk, everything from swiping at the spirits to tilting the Remote gently

"You even get radio feedback on your Wii Remote's speaker"

from side-to-side while walking across a narrow plank has been implemented – you even get radio feedback on your Wii Remote's small speaker, too.

Releasing spirits – even when they're closing in and you're being attacked from all sides – never feels clumsy or difficult to

control, meaning that you're unlikely to die from a poor control method. There's a palpable sense of fear when you're under attack

– especially when, as is often the case, your health is also depleting automatically until you banish the last spirit. And the sense of achievement when you do clear an area and limp to a shrine just in time to recharge your health is enormously satisfying.

Neat touches abound throughout the game. One set piece has you trying to locate an invisible spirit in a room, which is understandably tricky – and irritated further by the fact that he (or she, we're an equal opportunities ghostbuster here) keeps attacking you as you run around the room like a headless chicken looking for the solution. And then it hits you as you spot the bowls of incense strategically placed in the

The first village you come across is deserted... mostly.

Unsurprisingly, this is a boss.



CONTROL →



Cursed Mountain



You can also slash at spirits with your axe.

> Cursed Mountain cont.

corners... so you light them, causing a cloud of smoke to rise slowly from each one, and voila! You spot the spook gliding

through the smoke. Genius.

Or how about the fact that, as you get ever closer to the summit, the oxygen supply weakens in the air. To be expected obviously, as you're thousands of feet up, but what do you do? Thankfully, careless climbers before you have been kind enough to leave a plentiful supply of oxygen bottles behind, scattered throughout the snow. So then it becomes a frantic race to reach the next bottle before your supply runs out – and believe us, as you're heading for the final boss confrontation you definitely want to make sure you're clear-headed.



Roll over screen for annotations



But one of our favourite bits of the game has to be the maze found about halfway through. You have to reach a character in the middle of an open area. Simple you think, except surrounding them is an invisible maze of spikes. Using your third eye reveals the path through, but only for a very short amount of time. Eventually, after much invisible spikage and frequent third eye usage, you do reach them, but more horrors await, as powerful

"One of our favourite bits of the game has to be the maze found about halfway through"



A quick wiggle with the Remote should get rid of him.

demons suddenly appear, and (cruelly) the shrine needed to replenish your health is back at the start of the maze. Do you fight on regardless, or risk edging your way back through the maze to top up your health? The choice, as they say, is yours. >



It's very easy to get surrounded, so you need to keep an eye behind you.



CONTROL →



Cursed Mountain

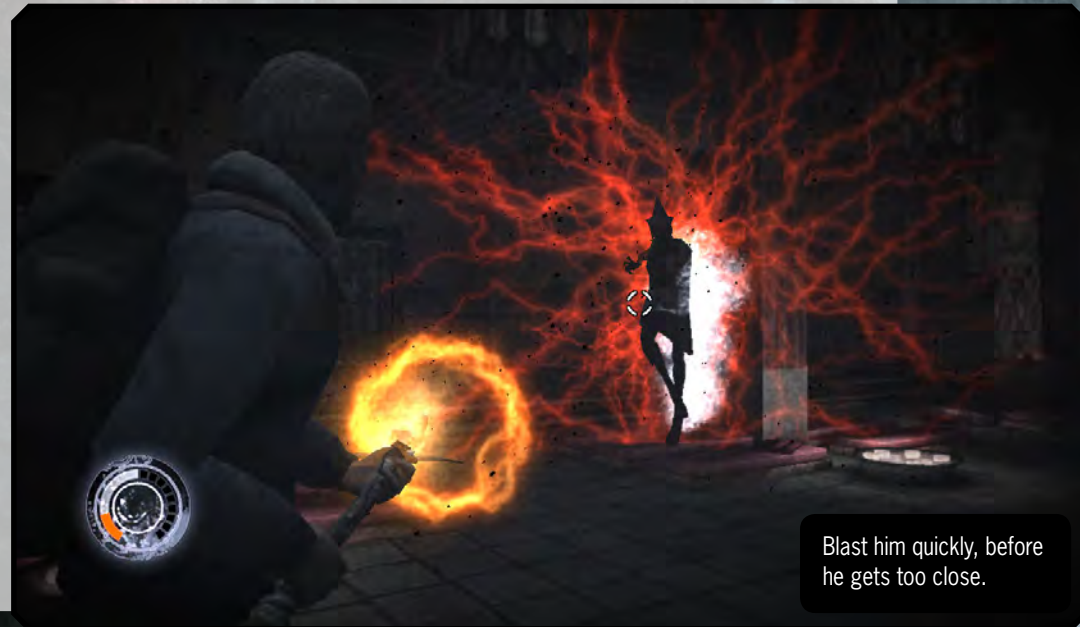
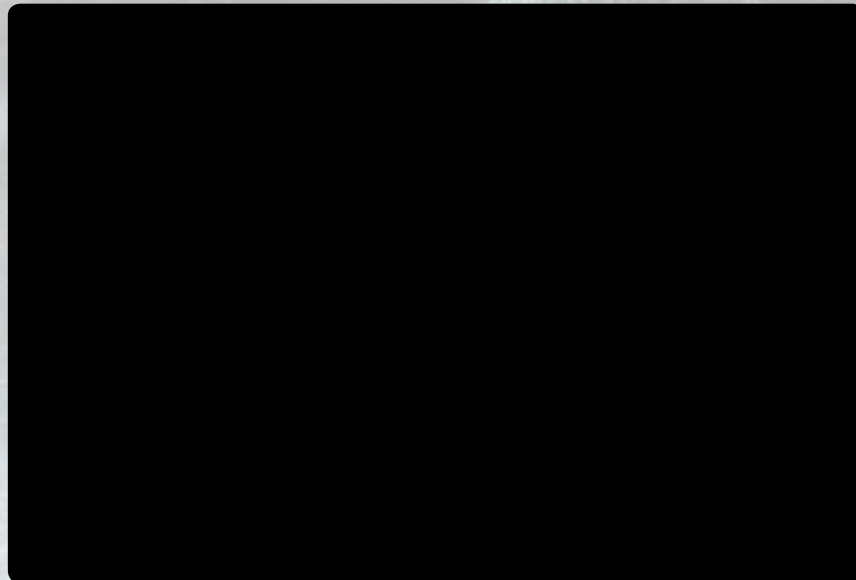


> Cursed Mountain cont.

The Wii's cuddly image as the ideal family console may be unshakeably set in stone, but we have seen a shift slightly towards more adult titles (Resident Evil and House of the Dead: OVERKILL to name but two) in the past few months. What we like about Cursed Mountain though, is that it doesn't use its 16+ rating gratuitously. You won't need to slice up multi-limbed creatures with chainsaws or blow zombies' heads off with a shotgun, but you will feel a shiver

"You'll feel a shiver down your spine when you spot your first spirit glide past the path in front of you"

down your spine when you spot your first spirit glide past the path in front of you. And you'll probably also visibly jump when a group of spirits suddenly leap out at you from the protection of the shadows. Make no mistake about it, Cursed Mountain may be lacking in blood and gore, but it more than makes up for it in the terror stakes. ●



INTERVIEW

CLIFF HANGER

Time to find out even more about this intriguing game...

Having played the game all the way through, we had more than a few questions for the developers, Deep Silver Vienna/Sproing. Thankfully, they were more than happy to answer them for us...

The game appears to be influenced by J-horror games such as The Ring and Ju-on...

Well, I guess it's something we can't deny. Our Design Director, responsible for the concept of Cursed Mountain is a big fan of Japanese and Asian games in general. Yes, influences of these games can be seen in Cursed Mountain, but our approach is a bit different. We work with a setting that is located in Tibet and the Himalayan region, but tell a story about a Western guy that is confronted with a mythology and an ancient world he

doesn't understand. He learns to deal with it though, and accepts all the weird stuff that is happening to him, because his main goal is to find his younger brother Frank – and hopefully alive, too...

Is Cursed Mountain coming out on any other platforms, or has it been designed specifically for the Wii?

Cursed Mountain was designed and developed exclusively for the Wii from the first moment on. The very innovative concept for controls and the fighting system – implementing Tibetan monks prayer gestures, for example – would not be possible on a different platform.

There's a lack of technology in the game to help Eric as it's set in the 1980s. What was the reasoning behind this?

As you mentioned, the 80s was a completely different decade technology-wise. Climbers didn't have satellite phones, GPRS systems or could be rescued by helicopters at 7,000 metres – something that happened last year on the K2. In the 80s, we are talking about old-school mountaineering. Climbers back then packed their rucksack and just climbed up mountains for the sake of experiencing the nature, the environment, and in order to learn something about themselves.

How long do you expect an average gamer to take to complete it?

We are not big fans of numbers, as these figures depend on the individual way you play the game. Either you take some time to explore the huge levels we are offering or you try to find all the collectable



Strike a pose...

items that will teach you a lot about the background story and Buddhism in general. The other way would be strictly following the linear story line of Cursed Mountain and not get too distracted by the side elements of the game. Either way, there are levels in Cursed Mountain



Let 'em have it!

Cursed Mountain

> Interview cont.

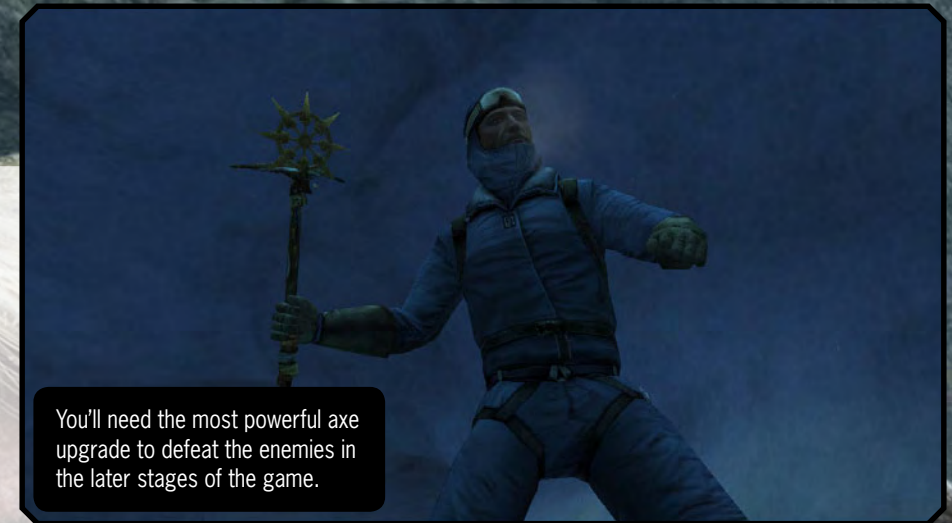
that take more than one hour to accomplish. The game offers 13 levels, so we think the Wii gamers are able to enjoy a very intense and not too short gameplay experience with Cursed Mountain.

Is there unlockable content? Or any secrets to find in the game?

No, Cursed Mountain is not offering unlockable content, but lots of secrets to discover to learn more about Buddhist mythology and ancient rituals buried for a long time in the Himalayan region.

The game's got a fantastic storyline. How does this develop over the course of the game? Can we expect any surprises?

As a developer we truly believe in narrative storytelling and do think that this fact is what a lot of games are missing most. Obviously we do not want to spoil too much at this stage, but it is safe to say that Cursed Mountain follows the tradition of classic movie scripts. The story is based on three acts, introducing the characters in act one, main plot and plot point in act



You'll need the most powerful axe upgrade to defeat the enemies in the later stages of the game.

two and fading the characters out in act three. Regarding surprises, Eric will find out some dark secrets during his journey to the summit of Chomolonzo. As mentioned before, Eric will also learn more about himself due to the inner reflections he is going through by surviving the ascent past the death zone.

Is Cursed Mountain going to be compatible with the Wii's new MotionPlus control system?

No, Cursed Mountain is not going to support Wii MotionPlus. We obviously evaluated this new and interesting technology, and also considered implementing it in our game, but the development process was too advanced at that stage. In order to reduce the risk and guarantee an on-time delivery, we decided against Wii MotionPlus. Still, this decision was made for Cursed Mountain and not for any other

product from our studio. We are expecting a lot of cool games in the near future, as Nintendo already showed a cool line up, including third-party titles, at the E3 this year.

Is there any possibility that Cursed Mountain could be the start of a franchise? Could a sequel be on the cards?

Well, our job within the Koch group is, based on our historical background and proven track record, to build up brands, create IPs and establish interesting console titles on the most important markets in the UK and North America. But first things first, let's see how well Cursed Mountain is perceived by the gamers and then we are able to start making plans for further games. But I wouldn't say we don't have any ideas in mind, how to develop further concepts within the Cursed Mountain franchise. ●

Cursed Mountain



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:



Wii

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CONTROL →

